



Observer report for Tile Hog Dutch Open (MCR, MERS 2)

Observer: Joël RATSIMANDRESY

Date: June 15th – 16th 2013

Place: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Website or other source(s) of information: All information on the website http://www.mahjongshopdot1.nl/tile_hog/: registration, program, list of participants, map...

Participants: 76 players

Represented countries:

NED: 50

BEL: 7

GER: 6

FRA: 6

ITA: 4

RUS: 2

POR: 1

Playing schedule: 2 days, 7 rounds (4+3) of 120 minutes

Location: The room is large enough to host all the players and leave enough space between them. Very easy access for people staying downtown and by car, it seemed easy too.

Equipment: We played with standard games and tables. Unfortunately I played on 3 tables so I don't know if there were discrepancies between tables. But as below, there were no complaints about it.

Refereeing: Janco Onnink was non-player referee.

Complaints: None.

Information / communication during the tournament:

Visible clock projected from a computer on a screen. A gong clearly informs players of the start and the end of sessions. Ranking up to date between each session, projected on a big screen.

There was a new drawing system tested (confer infra) which was explained briefly before the first round. It doesn't seem to have bothered players: anyway, I got no complaints during the tournament about it.

Sessions: Excellent playing atmosphere.

Catering: Lunch on the two days in the same place (sandwiches), drinks and others. Free bottles of water.

Prizes: Trophies for individual ranking (1st, 2nd and 3rd), and one more for the Dutch Champion. Certificates for all players with medals (then everybody can get a souvenir – more or less pleasant - from the tournament).

Conclusion: Very nice tournament, with many players from many countries. The winning race was intense, which added excitement to this pleasant tournament.

About the table seating: First of all, I will sum up how the seating was done for non player readers understood how this had been done (I inspired myself from an email sent to French players by their federation originally forwarded for the Netherlands federation).

There were four groups of 19 players (group A, B, C and D). The groups was based on the ranking on the EMA-list, so group A had the players which were high on the EMA-ranking list and group D had the players which were low on the ranking list. The playing schemes were prepared before the tournament. On each table there were a player from group A, B, C and D. except in round 2 and 6 when players had opponents from their own group.

At the start of the tournament each player drew a number. By this, the drawing was still random and players didn't have the possibility to choose opponents. The intent of this system is to get a better classification for all players and to reduce the likelihood to have differences of "route": for better ranked players, they get the same table of "killer" tables (2) and easy tables (5) and for worse ranked players; they get the same table of difficult tables (5) and balanced tables (2).

Some minor remark I get: it was intended to test with 80 players then when the number of players decreased to 76, the number of players in each group wasn't divisible by 4. But this doesn't change in my opinion the spirit and the effect of this drawing system.

Anyway, nobody was upset by this system and I have the feeling that many people didn't pay attention to it. For those who did, they have the feeling it won't change anything. Even some people think that the draw being a part of the game has to be subjected to the randomness. For the more sceptical or paranoid, they prefer this system instead of the one where players are already seated before the tournament.

To conclude, Janco assures me that there will be an analysis of the results and the score sheets to see what the impact is on the final ranking. It will be interesting to know if the tournament was easier for people from group A and more difficult for people from group D. All the intention to reduce variance is welcomed so I'm eager to know if we can conclude something from this experimentation. I have no idea of the difficulty of this task knowing that it is based on the fact that EMA ranking reflects reality (I got a discussion with a player about the fact that a player with 6 tournaments is compared to a player who played 20...). Then a complicated task but an interesting one.

It was a great idea and we are waiting for the exploitation of the results.